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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 28th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 17 June 1993, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. HADID (Algeria)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

OTHER MATTERS (continued)

(d) UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM REGULAR AND EXTRABUDGETARY TECHNICAL COOPERATION EXPENDITURES (DP/1993/57 and Corr.1 and Add.1 and DP/1993/58 and Add.1)

1. Mr. EDGREN (Assistant Administrator and Director, Bureau for Programme Policy and Evaluation), introducing the reports of the Administrator (DP/1993/57 and Corr.1 and Add.1 and DP/1993/58 and Add.1), said that both reports focused on growth and trends in expenditures and contributions. All components of non-UNDP-financed technical cooperation expenditures had declined between 1991 and 1992; for instance, expenditures from the regular budgets of agencies had fallen by 29 per cent, from $340 million in 1991 to $242 million in 1992, while the expenditures of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) had shrunk by 25 per cent, from $172 million in 1991 to $128 million in 1992. In 1992, total contributions received to finance the extrabudgetary expenditures of the traditional agencies had declined by 6 per cent in comparison with 1991, which meant that contributions and expenditures had fallen simultaneously for the first time since 1985.

2. Operational assistance delivered during 1992 by UNFPA, UNDP, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the World Bank/International Development Association (IDA) had grown by about 4 per cent over the previous year. Among other things, UNICEF expenditures in 1992 had grown by 27 per cent over the previous year's while assistance by WFP had grown by 18 per cent during the same period. However, technical cooperation as a percentage of total operational assistance had continued to decline.

3. Mr. ROHNER (Switzerland) said that the reports were very useful. He encouraged the secretariat to continue its labour-intensive work, which was of great service to the bilateral agencies and to the United Nations system as a whole.

4. Ms. KNUTSON (Canada) said that the reports of the Administrator now before the Council were a reminder of the larger United Nations technical cooperation context in which UNDP operated. They served a useful purpose in that they showed that the World Bank/IDA group and the United Nations specialized agencies were major players in the field of technical cooperation, outspending UNDP. Of course, her delegation noticed that the share of resources going to UNDP and the specialized agencies vis-à-vis the World Bank/IDA, WFP and UNICEF was declining in relative and absolute terms, as indicated in the reports. However, since her delegation had only just received document DP/1993/58 and Add.1 it had not yet studied the future implications of that trend.

5. Not only did a significant portion of the UNDP budget go to the specialized agencies but those agencies also received substantial resources from a variety of other sources. In some cases the extrabudgetary resources exceeded the regular budget funding of those agencies. She wondered what effect that volume of extrabudgetary funds had on the priorities and daily management of each of the United Nations specialized agencies concerned, and whether the agencies were

(Ms. Knutson, Canada)

in the best position to implement and administer development activities called for by such large amounts of extrabudgetary funds. She also wondered who exercised the governing or oversight functions in respect of the implementation of those extrabudgetary activities.

6. Some people, had suggested that for the volume of extrabudgetary funds increasingly directed to United Nations specialized agencies, the governance system was so extended and diffuse that supervision, programming coordination and accountability must be questioned. Direct responsibility tended to fall into a "no man's land" between separate Governing Councils.

7. Mr. EDGREN (Assistant Administrator and Director, Bureau for Programme Policy and Evaluation) said that document DP/1993/58 and Add.1 had been issued late because of time constraints. It would be useful for comparisons between the 1991 and 1992 figures since there had been major changes. The final version would be issued later. The question of governance - particularly the fact that a large portion of the budgets of specialized agencies was managed and governed outside their normal governance set-up - had been dealt with in some depth in the context of the Nordic project.

8. The PRESIDENT said that he took it that the Council wished to take note of the reports submitted.

9. It was so decided.

TECHNICAL COOPERATION AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES (DP/1993/52; DP/1993/L.9)

10. Mr. AMBATCHEW (Director, Special Unit for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (TCDC)), introducing the report of the High-level Committee on the Review of Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries on its eighth session (DP/1993/L.9), said that the relevant decisions had been adopted on the basis of consensus. The High-level Committee had reviewed the report of the Administrator on the implementation of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries, which had been prepared in compliance with guidelines resulting from the Committee's seventh session and new questionnaires introduced for the 1991-1992 report. The report had confirmed that significant progress had been achieved both in the promotion and the use of TCDC.

11. At its eighth session the High-level Committee had also considered a paper setting out a strategy for the 1990s which identified specific objectives to be pursued during the decade and the main elements to be taken into account for the promotion and application of TCDC by Governments and United Nations organizations on a priority basis. The paper reflected very wide agreement on the main elements that could be considered in shaping policies and approaches to be pursued in the light of the needs and the context of particular regions and countries.

12. Introducing the report of the Administrator (DP/1992/52), he said that the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) had endorsed the guidelines for the coordination and review of policies and procedures in the organizations of

(Mr. Ambatchew)

the United Nations development system concerning TCDC. The guidelines had then been approved by the High-level Committee at its eighth session, in decision 8/1 (DP/1993/L.9, annex I), in which the High-level Committee called upon ACC to monitor the implementation of the guidelines and requested the Administrator to report on the implementation of the decision.

13. During the period 1991-1992, UNDP had taken measures to ensure that the Special Programme Resources (SPR) made available through the Special Unit for TCDC provided catalytic complementary support on a much greater scale than before to UNDP-funded activities. Increased emphasis had been put on evaluation work in an effort to improve support services and TCDC had been given greater consideration in the preparation of programmes and implementation of projects through the active participation of the Special Unit in the Action Committee, Policy Team and individual projects and programmes. Many umbrella projects designed to support TCDC and its application had also been started by Governments drawing on indicative planning figure (IPF) resources or a mix of IPF and national resources. The SPR-financed programme approved for the fifth cycle also emphasized the focus on application and the use of TCDC through the introduction of two new subprogrammes.

14. Another major development with important implications was Economic and Social Council decision E/1992/41, which called on all parties to give first consideration to the use of TCDC. Consequently, the Administrator had informed the field offices of the importance of that decision and exhorted them and Governments to give priority to the application of that modality.

15. At its eighth session, in its relevant decision, the High-level Committee had also expressed concern at the level of resources made available through Special Programme Resources and had requested the Governing Council to consider maintaining programme resources at the approved level for the period 1992-1996.

16. Mr. CLAVIJO (Observer for Colombia) said that his delegation endorsed decisions 8/1 and 8/2 adopted by the High-level Committee at its eighth session (DP/1993/L.9, annex I). The adoption of a strategy to promote technical cooperation among developing countries as envisaged in decision 8/2 was vital; of equal importance was the High-level Committee's concern about the decrease in Special Programme Resources, which would make it very difficult to achieve the objectives of TCDC within the United Nations system.

17. His delegation was going to submit to the Drafting Group a procedural resolution calling upon the Governing Council to endorse those two decisions and requesting the Administrator to see to it that all means available were used to ensure the implementation of the decisions. He hoped that all delegations would support the resolution.

18. Mr. PHANIT (Observer for Thailand) said that in the new climate of international development cooperation the members of the international community had set a new development agenda in which peace, development and democracy were closely interlinked and equally important. They shared a new vision of sustainable human development in which people were both the end and the means of development. After almost half a century of multilateral development and

(Mr. Phanit, Observer, Thailand)

cooperation, the world had returned to the original ideal of the Charter, which was "to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom". Thailand remained convinced of the importance of TCDC in the new world climate. TCDC was an indispensable instrument for enhancing national and collective self-reliance, broadening true global partnerships, and linking the South, North, West and East as equal development partners.

19. The development challenges in the decade ahead demanded that TCDC be approached from different perspectives in order to strengthen technical cooperation among countries of the South. TCDC was a multidimensional process which could take place at the bilateral, trilateral and multilateral levels. For its part, Thailand saw the future role of TCDC as part and parcel of subregional, regional and international cooperation aimed at achieving sustainable development. UNDP and its Special Unit for TCDC played a crucial role in maintaining the spirit of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action.

20. The relevance of UNDP in the contemporary multilateral assistance development system lay in its ability to grasp new responsibilities as they emerged, and a renewed commitment to TCDC must be part of those responsibilities. His delegation was pleased to see that UNDP had adopted a new focus in responding to the international development consensus in the areas of environment and development, the advancement of women and their role in development, regional economic integration, and the enhancement of the role of non-governmental and grass-roots organizations.

21. In the field of environment and development, he welcomed the progress and initiative of UNDP in coordinating the implementation of Agenda 21 with other organs of the United Nations system. Thailand fully supported the Capacity 21 initiative and the role of UNDP in managing the Global Environment Facility. TCDC, as a concept and modality, would be incorporated into the projects or programmes under those two funds.

22. In the field of women in development, he noted with satisfaction the new strategies and initiatives adopted by UNDP and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) to force the issue of women in development into the mainstream. His delegation shared the view that women's issues could not be separated from any development issue and that all issues were women's issues. It was therefore imperative that consideration of the role of women should be part of all TCDC activities.

23. With regard to regional cooperation, Thailand supported the role of UNDP, in cooperation with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), in enhancing regional and subregional cooperation, particularly within the context of the Association of South-East Asian Nations and Indo-China. ESCAP, however, should be more committed to enhancing the TCDC modality in its development activities.

24. In addition to those areas, Thailand welcomed the role of UNDP in the new common ground for multilateral assistance and cooperation within the United Nations system and commended the Programme on its efforts to provide assistance

(Mr. Phanit, Observer, Thailand)

in such areas as humanitarian affairs, nation-building, rehabilitation and reconstruction, and the HIV/AIDS pandemic. TCDC should also be part of that new focus.

25. Thailand had attained the target of an 8 per cent increase in voluntary contributions to UNDP. In recent years, it had forged an increasingly strong partnership with other countries of the region. Its international cooperation programme had provided bilateral technical cooperation to other developing countries in various fields ranging from agriculture and public health to management and administrative training. Thailand had also expanded TCDC trilateral cooperation with United Nations agencies in order to enhance technical cooperation with other developing countries. It saw that arrangement as a new alternative for integrating TCDC into the subregional technical cooperation scheme with its neighbouring countries in Indo-China. His Government would continue to explore new approaches aimed at expanding TCDC activities with other developing countries in the region.

26. The outcome of the eighth session of the High-level Committee on the Review of Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries, held in May 1993, had strengthened Thailand's belief that the wide application of TCDC in the implementation of development programmes and projects was crucial to achieving the goal of an equal development partnership. In order to achieve the ideal of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action, however, it was important to first strengthen national focal points and to develop clearer policies and commitments.

27. Referring to the report of the Administrator on TCDC (DP/1993/52), he welcomed the measures taken by UNDP to expand the use of TCDC in the programmes and projects which it funded. His delegation agreed in principle with the recommendations and draft guidelines prepared by the Fifth Agency TCDC Focal Point Meeting of United Nations organizations held in July 1992.

28. In a world of constant changes, TCDC could change its form and structure but never its goals and idealism. It was indeed the bridge that joined the peoples and countries of the South.

29. Mr. MORALES-CARBALLO (Cuba) said that he supported the proposal by the Colombian delegation that the Council endorse the decisions contained in annex I to document DP/1993/L.9.

30. Mrs. CORVALAN (Observer for Chile) reaffirmed the importance that her country attached to technical cooperation among developing countries as one of the innovative initiatives to be strengthened and taken into account in the allocation of IPFs in the sixth programming cycle, particularly for developing countries at the intermediate level of development that were being excluded from the programming cycle so as to enable them to enjoy comparative advantages.

31. Chile would like to strengthen its national capacities which would enable it to participate in TCDC. As a result of the experience gained it could contribute to the implementation of that system in the future. In that regard, she supported the Colombian delegation's proposal.

32. Mr. ROHNER (Switzerland) noted with satisfaction the progress made in the field of TCDC. He hoped that such efforts would continue in the future.

33. Mr. AMBATCHEW (Director, Special Unit for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (TCDC)) noted with appreciation the expressions of support for the work carried out in the area of TCDC. Some of the suggestions put forward at the current meeting would be followed up in future activities.

34. The PRESIDENT, summarizing the general debate with particular reference to issues relating to the future role of UNDP, said that the high-level character of the debate was attested to by the presence among the speakers of one prime minister, one deputy chairman of a council of ministers, ministers, and a number of other high-level officials. Well-informed analysis and thought-provoking ideas and suggestions had characterized the debate, whose central theme had undoubtedly been the future role of UNDP.

35. Most delegations had spoken against the background of the recent significant decrease in the resources of UNDP. Some had attributed that situation to budgetary constraints in donor countries and to the rapidly increasing demands in the areas of emergency assistance and peace-keeping, while others had cautioned that the modest resource prospects should not lead the Council in the direction of a lessening of the role of UNDP. Concern had also been voiced that significant IPF reductions could undermine carefully designed priority development programmes.

36. All delegations had stressed the high value they attached to UNDP and the unique standing of the Programme in the international development system. At a time of growing awareness of the interlinkages between peace and development, and while the international community was confronted with challenges of staggering proportions in such vital areas as humanitarian assistance, poverty alleviation, environmental protection and sustainable development, and the HIV/AIDS pandemic, it was widely felt that a strong and effective UNDP could make a difference. The concept of sustainable human development and the active profile of UNDP in the follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, particularly through the Capacity 21 project, had won general praise from speakers. In that connection, the distinctive comparative advantages of UNDP had been acknowledged as essential factors in the record of achievements of the Programme and as providing a sound basis for the future role of UNDP. The ideological and commercial neutrality of UNDP, its universality, multilateralism and the grant nature of the resources it allocated to developing countries had been noted in that regard.

37. Many delegations had also stressed the value which they attached to the world-wide field network of UNDP, to the multisectoral nature of its mandate and operations, and to its irreplaceable role as a repository of decades of development experience.

38. The development and refinement of new instruments, particularly the programme approach, national execution, and the new support cost arrangements had been welcomed as positive developments, although some delegations had referred to the need for further elaboration and clarification of guidelines.

(The President)

39. Similarly, the concept of the country strategy note as a useful tool for improving coordination of United Nations activities at the country level had been widely accepted, although a number of delegations had emphasized the role of recipient Governments as the driving force behind the elaboration of the strategy note and had stressed the need to ensure a truly country-based programming process.

40. Some delegations had identified the decentralization of authority from headquarters to the field level, country specificity, the adoption of flexible approaches by UNDP, and the strengthening of the role of the resident coordinator in promoting capacity-building in the recipient countries as areas in which further initiatives should be taken if UNDP wished to build on its comparative advantages and to sharpen its competitive edge in the evolving field of international development coordination.

41. Several speakers had endorsed the emphasis by UNDP on women in development and had called for continued use of cost-effective means of implementation, such as TCDC, the United Nations Volunteers programme and closer collaboration with non-governmental and grass-roots organizations. The need to increase the resources allocated to Africa in view of the acute economic problems of that continent had also received broad support.

42. Some delegations had expressed the view that the future role of UNDP should focus on a limited number of thematic areas, while others felt that future activities of the Programme should be directed almost exclusively towards the low-income countries. Yet other delegations had argued for a more systematic focus of the activities of UNDP in the areas of good governance, democracy and electoral assistance. Those new options and initiatives had not gained the full support of the Governing Council at the current stage.

43. The thematic approach had raised concerns about compatibility with the multisectoral character of UNDP on which the comparative advantages of the Programme were predicated. It further seemed to some delegations to be in conflict with the country specificity and flexibility which had also underpinned the major successes of UNDP to date. Moreover, the thematic approach had proved to be a cumulative process which had often resulted in spreading UNDP resources too thinly at the expense of the real needs and requirements of developing countries.

44. The concentration on low-income countries alone was seen by some delegations as jeopardizing the universal scope of the Programme and calling into question its world-wide network which had proved invaluable in numerous instances, particularly during emergency situations and humanitarian crises. It further endangered the profile UNDP had been struggling to maintain as a coordinating and central funding agency.

45. With regard to the role of UNDP in promoting good governance, democracy and electoral assistance, there had been some strong endorsements of that trend as well as equally strong objections. Some groups had claimed that the involvement of UNDP in those areas should be on an exceptional basis, given the existence of

other competent mechanisms and the need to focus UNDP resources on sustainable human development. Other delegations had strongly advocated the re-empowerment of UNDP as the central funding and coordinating body which it had originally been meant to be.

46. Reference had also been made to the ongoing process of restructuring and revitalization of the economic, social and related fields of the United Nations. Different views had been expressed on the issue of governance and on the question of financing mechanisms and modalities. The general view, however, was that a constructive outcome of the discussions would help the climate for more meaningful and responsible operational activities.

47. UNDP must never lose the support it received from the developing countries. That support stemmed from its multinational composition and global presence, and from the sense of ownership that came from full participation in governance.

48. Mr. ROHNER (Switzerland) said that the President's summary of the general debate would be very useful to the Council in its deliberations on the future of UNDP. He therefore proposed that it should be included in the Council's final documentation.

49. The PRESIDENT said he took it that the Council wished to adopt the proposal by the representative of Switzerland.

50. It was so decided.

LIST OF REPORTS REQUESTED IN DRAFT DECISIONS

51. Mr. GRAISSE (Secretary of the Council) said that a preliminary list of reports requested in draft decisions at the current session had been circulated to the members of the Council in accordance with a procedure initiated two years earlier concerning rationalization of work. The list referred to reports that had already been requested in decisions adopted by the Drafting Group and the Standing Committee for Programme Matters. The Budgetary and Finance Committee had not yet concluded its work. On the whole, it was not felt that the reports requested would place an unmanageable burden on the secretariat or that there would be an unduly long list of documents for future sessions.

52. Mr. ZOLLER (United Kingdom) said that his delegation attached a great deal of importance to the list of reports requested in draft decisions and felt that the Council should postpone final consideration of the matter until the complete list was available. As his delegation had pointed out in the past, the Council should as much as possible consider the possibility of biennializing reports and avoiding duplication, which sometimes occurred. Efforts should continue to limit the number and length of reports and reduce the burden on the secretariat as much as possible.

53. Mr. GRAISSE (Secretary of the Council) said that the secretariat had reduced the number of pages of documentation submitted to the Council and would continue its efforts in that regard in order to make a more manageable set of documents available.

54. The PRESIDENT said that the Council would return to the item when it received the complete list of reports requested in draft decisions at its next meeting.

MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COUNCIL IN 1994

55. The PRESIDENT said that the Bureau had given consideration to the calendar of work for 1994 and the draft provisional agenda for the forty-first session of the Governing Council.

56. Mr. GRAISSE (Secretary of the Council), introducing the item, said that the draft provisional agenda for the forty-first session of the Governing Council would be reviewed and adopted at the organizational meeting to be held in February 1994. The calendar of work for 1994 might be changed, subject to decisions by the General Assembly on the restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations. At the current time, the organizational meeting and special session of the Governing Council were scheduled to be held from 15 to 18 February 1994. The forty-first session of the Governing Council, which would include a high-level segment, would be held in Geneva from 6 to 24 June 1994. It was anticipated that the workload would not be as heavy at that session since there would be fewer country programmes to be considered by the Standing Committee for Programme Matters and since the Budgetary and Finance Committee would have a lighter agenda because 1994 was not a budget year. Accordingly, the Council should be able to conclude its work within that three-week period.

57. Mr. ROHNER (Switzerland) said that the Council should take account of the fact that very little time had been allotted for consideration of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) at the current session. The number of meetings devoted to the Fund at the forty-first session would be of particular importance in view of preparations for the International Conference on Population and Development to be held in Cairo in 1994.

58. Mr. GRAISSE (Secretary of the Council) said that although the number of plenary meetings allotted for UNFPA had seemed insufficient to certain delegations, account had always been taken of the possibility of extending the discussion on the Fund in plenary meetings, if that had been felt necessary. In view of the upcoming Cairo Conference, the Council could give more time to the consideration of UNFPA at its forty-first session since, as he had already pointed out, the workload would be lighter then.

59. The PRESIDENT said he took it that the Council agreed, subject to decisions of the General Assembly on the restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations, to the dates for its organizational meeting and special session and the forty-first session, as well as the draft provisional agenda for the forty-first session as outlined by the Secretary.

60. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 11.40 a.m.